

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1303

November 30, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I want to thank you for your leadership in convening a "jobs summit" at the White House this week. With national unemployment officially at 10.2% and considerably more workers discouraged from seeking employment, many Americans are facing dire economic circumstances for themselves and their families. American workers are in need of jobs and American industries confront a very difficult climate for job creation. Clearly help is needed, and I believe the best way to provide both recovery and reinvestment for our nation is to enact the overdue, multi-year surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Transportation infrastructure investment has been shown to provide approximately 35,000 jobs for every \$1 billion invested. These are good-paying jobs here at home. And improving our transportation systems also makes America more efficient, furthering our economic competitiveness as the world recovers from recession. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act did provide some short-term funding for transportation infrastructure projects, these funds comprised only about 5 percent of the bill. But some reports estimate that this transportation investment has accounted for up to 25% of the jobs saved or created by ARRA.

There is a significant backlog of critical infrastructure needs in our nation, from highway construction and road repair to the expansion and revitalization of our nation's transit systems. In fact, the American Society of Civil Engineers estimates we need to invest \$1.4 trillion over the next five years to bring the state of the nation's transportation infrastructure up to a "good" condition. This demonstrates that in addition to creating jobs, a new transportation reauthorization bill is necessary to ensure the long-term health of our infrastructure and our economy.

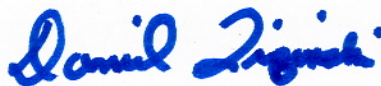
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The last reauthorization bill providing vital federal transportation infrastructure funding, SAFETEA-LU, expired on October 1, 2009. Short-term extensions of current law are insufficient to address the growing infrastructure needs of the entire nation and fail to provide long-term investments. Continuation of current law over a period of months leaves our nation's transportation needs woefully underfunded, and does not exhibit the leadership we need to improve our infrastructure and put people to work.

More than two years ago, the Highway and Transit Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee began work on the new reauthorization bill with a field hearing that I asked Subcommittee Chairman Peter DeFazio to hold in Chicago to discuss the region's needs. Since that time, under the leadership of full committee Chairman Jim Oberstar and Chairman DeFazio, we have worked to produce a very innovative bill that provides robust investment in our nation's infrastructure and transforms our surface transportation system so that it can meet today's needs and tomorrow's challenges. Included in this six-year bill, as passed by the Highway and Transit Subcommittee on June 24, 2009, is \$500 billion in infrastructure funding for highways, transit, and high-speed rail. This carefully crafted bill could be enacted quickly, creating and sustaining millions of jobs and paving the way for America's economic recovery.

Transportation is a vital component of our nation's economy, and short term and long term improvements to our highway, transit, and rail systems will contribute significantly to job creation and our economic recovery. Now is the critical time to proceed with approving a multi-year transportation bill. As you conduct your "jobs summit" this week, I hope that you will join me in supporting the speedy consideration of a significant investment in our transportation infrastructure. Investment in our infrastructure is an investment in jobs.

Sincerely,



Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress